

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8526

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 BONN 15964

LIMDIS/NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: GW, GE, PGOV, PFOR

SUBJECT: EAST GERMAN OFFICIAL'S COMMENT ON WEST

BERLIN, FRG/GDR AND EAST/WEST RELATIONS

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: IN RECENT CONVERSATION WITH
EMBOFF, EAST GERMAN SOURCE DISCUSSED DEVELOPMENTS IN
THE GDR AND IN FRG/GDR RELATIONS. THRUST OF HIS COM-
MENTS WAS THAT INTERNATIONAL EVENTS, COMBINED WITH
APPOINTMENT OF HARDLINERS TO LEADING POSITIONS IN EAST
BERLIN, HAVE LED TO A HARDENING OF GDR POSITIONS ON
BERLIN, FRG/GDR RELATIONS AND TOWARD THE WEST
GENERALLY. END SUMMARY.

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2. SOURCE DWELT AT SOME LENGTH ON PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH WEST BERLIN. HE SAID THE PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRG ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICE IN WEST BERLIN HAD COME AS A SHOCK TO THE GDR LEADERSHIP. HE CLAIMED THE LEADERSHIP HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE SOVIETS DURING THE BERLIN AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS THAT THE FEDERAL PRESENCE IN WEST BERLIN WOULD BE REMOVED. ON THAT UNDERSTANDING, THE GDR HAD AGREED TO CERTAIN CONCESSIONS IN THE WEST'S FAVOR IN THE CONTEXT OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT. EMBOFF SAID THIS HAD NEVER BEEN AGREED TO BETWEEN ALLIES AND SOVIETS: IN FACT, THE SPECIFIC PROVISION FOR FEDERAL PLENIPOTENTIARY IN WEST BERLIN IN THE AGREEMENT INDICATED CLEARLY THAT A CONTINUING FEDERAL PRESENCE WAS CONTEMPLATED.

3. SOURCE SAID THE FEELING IN THE GDR LEADERSHIP WAS THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS STRIVING TO EXPAND ITS ROLE AND ACTIVITIES GENERALLY IN WEST BERLIN. IT ALSO SEEMED TO BE TRYING TO IMPOSE ON THE EAST EUROPEAN STATES INTERPRETATIONS OF THE BERLIN AGREEMENT THAT WENT BEYOND WHAT HAD BEEN AGREED BY THE FOUR POWERS. HE CLAIMED THAT THIS RESULTED ABOVE ALL FROM THE LEGALISTIC APPROACH WHICH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WAS TAKING TOWARD WEST BERLIN ISSUES. THIS FRG APPROACH HAD LED TO A HARDENING OF THE GDR POSITION TOWARD THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, REFLECTED IN HONECKER'S NOVEMBER 1 "NEUES DEUTSCHLAND" INTERVIEW (BERLIN 1892) AND IN OTHER PRESS ATTACKS ON THE FRG.

4. EMBOFF COMMENTED THAT IT WAS DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE EAST/WEST DETENTE BEING ABLE TO PROCEED IF BERLIN WAS AGAIN TO BECOME A CONTENTIOUS ISSUE. SOURCE CONCEDED THIS POINT BUT STATED THAT THERE WERE PEOPLE IN THE GDR LEADERSHIP WHO NOW THOUGHT THAT EVENTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND US/SOVIET TENSIONS HAD CREATED A DIFFERENT INTERNATIONAL ATMOSPHERE. THESE PEOPLE NOW FELT ABLE TO ADOPT STIFF POSITIONS ON BERLIN, ON FRG/GDR RELATIONS AND ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS GENERALLY. EMBOFF ASKED IF THIS STANCE HAD MOSCOW'S APPROVAL, TO WHICH SOURCE REPLIED THAT MOSCOW HAD CERTAINLY APPROVED THE TOUGH

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GDR POSITION ON BERLIN.

5. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID THAT THE GDR WAS ESPECIALLY CONCERNED ABOUT THE EXFILTRATION PROBLEM. THE PRESENT TRIAL IN EAST BERLIN (BERLIN 1872) WAS INTENDED AS A PROPAGANDA EFFORT TO DISCOURAGE THE ORGANIZERS OF EXFILTRATION OPERATIONS AS WELL AS POTENTIAL EAST GERMAN ESCAPEES. BUT IT WAS ALSO INTENDED EVENTUALLY AS A

DIRECT ATTACK ON THE FRG AND THE US: OUR SOURCE WARNED THAT THERE MIGHT BE FURTHER EVIDENCE PRODUCED IN THE TRIAL TO SHOW THAT FRG POLICE OFFICIALS AND US SOLDIERS AND OFFICIALS WERE ACTIVELY INVOLVED IN THE EXFILTRATION OPERATIONS. HE CLAIMED THE GDR HAD PHOTOS TO BACK UP ITS CASE AND WOULD PRODUCE THESE AT THE RIGHT MOMENT. HE SAID THE GDR WOULD EVENTUALLY CHARGE THAT THE BERLIN AGREEMENT HAD BEEN BROKEN BY THE WEST'S INVOLVEMENT

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LIMDIS/NOFORN

IN THESE ACTIVITIES.

6. EMBOFF SAID THIS WOULD BE AN EXTREMELY SERIOUS STEP.

SOURCE CONCEDED THIS, BUT SAID HE THOUGHT THAT THE GDR LEADERSHIP MIGHT BE PREPARED TO GO EASIER ON THE EXFILTRATION PROBLEM IF THERE WERE INDICATIONS THAT THE FEDERAL PRESENCE IN WEST BERLIN WERE TO BE DIMINISHED.

7. REGARDING FRG/GDR RELATIONS GENERALLY, SOURCE SAID THAT THE GDR LEADERSHIP WAS NOW ADOPTING AN INCREASINGLY HARD POSITION. IT HAD BECOME EXASPERATED WITH THE HAGGLING OVER THE ACCREDITATION OF THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIONS AND WAS NOW DETERMINED TO STICK TO ITS POSITION. CONFIDENTIAL

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TION THAT THEY BE ACCREDITED ONLY TO THE RESPECTIVE FOREIGN MINISTRIES. HOWEVER, EVEN IF THE FRG WAS TO ACCEPT THIS POSITION, OUR SOURCE THOUGHT THAT THE ATMOSPHERE WAS SO UNFAVORABLE FOR ANY DEVELOPMENT OF RELATIONS THAT ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PERMANENT MISSIONS WOULD NOT TAKE PLACE FOR MANY MONTHS.

8. SOURCE SPOKE SEEMINGLY FRANKLY AND SOMEWHAT RUEFULLY ABOUT THE PERSONNEL CHANGES IN THE GDR LEADERSHIP. HE SAID THAT HONECKER WAS GETTING FOREIGN POLICY ADVICE FROM A GROUP OF HARDLINERS (LAMBERZ, NORDEN, AXEN AND JOACHIM HERMANN) WHO HAD NO UNDERSTANDING FOR OR SYMPATHY WITH DETENTE OR A REASONABLE POLICY TOWARD THE FRG. THE NEW PREMIER, HORST SINDERMAN, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THE ECONOMY AND FOR DOMESTIC PROBLEMS AND THUS HAS NO TIME FOR FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES. STOPH HAS BEEN EFFECTIVELY REMOVED FROM ACTIVITY IN IMPORTANT SUBSTANTIVE FIELDS. MITTAG AND HALBRITTER, SEEING THE CONSERVATIVE WAVE OF REPLACEMENTS IN KEY POSITIONS COMING FROM THE ARMY, INTELLIGENCE SERVICES AND YOUTH MOVEMENT (FDJ), HAD MOVED OR BEEN MOVED OUT OF THE AREA OF ECONOMIC POLICY-MAKING. HE SAID THAT THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE IN EAST BERLIN HAD CHANGED FOR THE WORSE WITH THE ADVENT OF WHAT HE CALLED AT ONE POINT THE NEANDERTHALS. NONE OF THEM, HE CLAIMED, UNDERSTANDS FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DETENTE OR THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF COOPERATION WITH THE WEST. HE PERSONALLY SAW DIFFICULT DAYS AHEAD IN THE GDR.

9. SOURCE ASKED ABOUT THE PROSPECTS FOR US/GDR RELATIONS AND WAS TOLD ON PERSONAL BASIS THAT THE US SIDE WOULD PROBABLY FIND IT DIFFICULT TO MOVE AHEAD WITH THE GDR UNTIL THE LOGISTICAL PROBLEMS OF HOUSING, RESIDENCE AND CHANCELLERY WERE RESOLVED.

10. COMMENT: SOURCE WAS UNUSUALLY CRITICAL OF DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE GDR AND OF THE CONSEQUENTLY POOR PROSPECTS FOR A REASONABLE EAST GERMAN POSITION ON BERLIN, INNER-GERMAN AND EAST/WEST PROBLEMS. SOME OF

THIS MAY HAVE BEEN TACTICAL, DONE IN THE HOPE THAT EMBOFF
WOULD PASS WORD OF THE TOUGH GDR POSITION TO FRG AND US
AUTHORITIES WITH THE FURTHER HOPE THAT THESE AUTHORITIES
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MIGHT TAKE SOME CONCILIATORY MEASURES IN THE FEDERAL
PRESENCE AND EXFILTRATION FIELDS RESPECTIVELY. THE
THREAT AGAINST THE BERLIN AGREEMENT IS, OF COURSE, NOT
NEW: GDR REP KOHL MADE THE SAME THREAT SOME TWO MONTHS
AGO TO EGON BAHR (BONN 12345). WHAT IS NEW IS THE
LINKING OF THE US TO THE ENTIRE PROBLEM.

11. THE EAST GERMAN'S APPROACH TO WEST BERLIN MATTERS,

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I.E. SUGGESTING A TRADEOFF OF FEDERAL PRESENCE FOR EXFILTRATION, WAS ECHOED IN AN EMBOFF'S CONVERSATION NOVEMBER 5 WITH THE SOVIET EMBASSY POLITICAL COUNSELOR IN BONN. THE LATTER SAID THAT THE CURRENT DIFFICULTIES OVER WEST BERLIN WERE TACTICAL IN NATURE AND DID NOT REFLECT ANY SOVIET INTENTION TO HAVE A CONFRONTATION WITH THE WEST. HE SAID THE USSR WAS STILL INTERESTED IN CONTINUING ITS DETENTE POLICY AND WOULD NOT ALLOW BERLIN ISSUES TO GET IN THE WAY. HE COMMENTED THAT HE THOUGHT SOME OF THE SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN PRESSURE ON EXFILTRATION AND LEGAL ASSISTANCE QUESTIONS SHOULD BE VIEWED AGAINST THE SOVIET/EAST GERMAN DESIRE TO HAVE THE FEDERAL PRESENCE REDUCED.

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12. IF WE CAN ACCEPT THE SOVIET AND EAST GERMAN OFFICIALS' STANCE AT FACE VALUE, WE WOULD NOT EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO ALLOW BERLIN MATTERS TO OVERHEAT THE INTERNATIONAL ATMOSPHERE AT THIS POINT. HOWEVER, EVEN IF BERLIN IS KEPT OFF THE FRONT BURNERS, WE WOULD EXPECT THE SOVIETS TO ALLOW THE GDR TO CONTINUE TO CREATE DIFFICULTIES WITH THE FRG ON A WHOLE RANGE OF ISSUES. THE SOVIETS HAVE NO SERIOUS INTEREST, IN OUR VIEW, IN SEEING THE TWO GERMAN SIDES IMPROVE THEIR TIES AND, MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS MAY HAVE TO PROVIDE THE EAST GERMANS WITH SOME MANEUVERING ROOM WITH THE FRG IN EXCHANGE FOR HAVING WEST BERLIN ISSUES REMOVED AS POINTS OF CONTENTION. THE SOVIETS' ONLY CARE IN PERMITTING SUCH A COURSE OF GDR ACTION WOULD PROBABLY BE TO ENSURE THAT NOTHING THAT IS DONE AFFECTS THE LARGER CLIMATE OF EAST/WEST RELATIONS. SO, EVEN HERE, THE GDR ROOM FOR ACTION MAY IN THE END BE RELATIVELY LIMITED.

HILLENBRAND

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